

Holdingford City Council Minutes

Monday, January 13th, 2025

Council Members in attendance: Andy Higgins, Jayme Opatz, Seth Young, Tim Winter, Travis Harlander.

Others in attendance: Nicky Lahr, Keith Hommerding, Herman Lensing, Karla Kalla, Jenny Gunderson, Bryon Kester, Mike Trettle, Steve Horvath, Jim VanderHeyden, Katie Auer, Emma Butkowski, Agnes Randt, Carol Harlander, Kiera Dehn, Kaydince Dehn, Susan Sanchez Mohs, Mathew Kunstleben, Kimberly Kunstleben, Ana Harlander.

Acting Mayor, Jayme Opatz, opened the meeting at 7:00 and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Jayme Opatz, Seth Young, and Andy Higgins were sworn in as Council Members and Travis Harlander was sworn in as Mayor. May it be noted that Eric Berscheid and Kelly Abfalter are to be removed from the Versa Bank and the Magnifi Credit Union accounts.

Guests: Girl Scout troop 952 representatives, Katie Auer, Kaydince Dehn, Kiera Dehn, and Emma Butkowski presented a proposal to install 2 little libraries. One would replace the existing one at the trailhead park, and the other would be installed at Veteran's Park. Tim made a motion to approve the installation of the little libraries as long as they are to work with Maintenance Supervisor, Steve Horvath, to find a location that works for everyone. Andy seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Representatives Mike Trettle and Jim Vander Heyden spoke on behalf of the AA group, which rents City Hall every Wednesday evening. They requested a reduction of cost since the non-profit rate went up from \$10 to \$15 in 2025. The Council stated that they already had a reduced rate specifically for non-profits and would not be able to offer the reduction.

Jayme made a motion to approve the December consent agenda. Seth seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Keith Hommerding gave the Fire Department report, including the following call numbers for the year: Krain Twsp (8), Holding Twsp (63), City of Holdingford (65), Brockway Twsp (17), Albany Twsp (1), and one weather call with no district listed. He stated that he was elected Chief again this year, and would send an updated officer's list to the Clerk. Jayme made a motion to approve Keith as the Holdingford Fire Department Chief. Andy seconded it and it passed with all in favor. The fire department is working on updating SOPs and SOGs. Keith said he would sit down with the Clerk to review this. Seth made a motion to increase the annual fire dept retirement contribution by \$100. Jayme seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor, with Tim abstaining from the vote.

Jayme read the liquor store report. He stated that 2024 preliminary numbers showed a profit of over \$8k, which is a large swing in the right direction compared to the last few years. 2024 inventory was completed on January 1st, and results will be submitted to the auditors. New Year's Eve, the Muni was the only bar open until midnight. Due to paying the bartender double-time, profits were still low for the night. Future holiday openings may need to change due to the low numbers. Looking ahead to 2025, there will be some minor price changes to keep up with the rising distributor costs. Hours will be adjusted including Closing Sundays effective February 23rd, and reducing hours on Monday to 1-9pm. The Muni will be available to rent on Sundays, as soon as a fee schedule is worked out. A dart league has been started, a chili cookoff is planned for February 2nd and a jukebox party will be on February 16th.

Dave Blommel was not present for the Engineer's report; however, he prepared a resolution to begin the bidding process for repaving North High Court. Jayme made a motion to approve resolution 25-1-13-2. Andy seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Minutes are not official until approved by the City Council and signed by the Clerk.

Nicky read the Clerk's report. She reported that the City received the 2nd half of LGA and 2nd half of property tax payments. She also reported that the City's large bond payment was made as well as the audit fees, keeping the finances pretty neutral. She is working on closing out 2024 and preparing for the audit scheduled in April. The new website is up and running and she is still working on getting the online rental module and the land use permit module up and running. The new IT support is in place and all information has been migrated to the server. They also assisted getting email transferred to .gov. 1099s are being completed along with PERA exclusion reporting. Nicky mentioned that newsletter has been discontinued, however the City Council minutes will still remain available at City Hall. Important information will be communicated through the City Website, the City's Facebook page, and occasionally in the mailed utility bills.

Steve gave the Maintenance report. He found out that the two mixers that went out will not be covered under warranty. They replaced all of the lights at City Hall and the Maintenance shop with LED. Completed annual reports and sampling. Worked with Larsen Excavating on the Water Main Break on the 200 block of 2nd Street. Steve asked the council for input on the ice-skating rink. He mentioned the temps were too high in December to set it up and now it's late in the year. The decision was made to hold off until next winter to set it up. Steve also mentioned to the council that the sidewalk on South Side of Washington Street is getting too difficult to clear with our equipment due to the leaning retaining walls. It was decided that it would no longer be maintained by the city, and the Clerk would send letters to the property owners letting them know.

Jayme made a motion to approve resolution 25-1-13-1 approving the official designations for the City for 2025. Tim seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Andy made a motion to send a letter of support to Stearns County to apply for a grant that would supply funding for seal coating and patching the Lake Wobegon Trail. Tim seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Notices sent for past-due water bills: Andy Higgins, Kevin Feia, Joseph and Lana Doll, Shannon Dalcin, Robert Keil, Dale Lundberg, Greg and Kyna Reiter, and Covered Bridge.

Looking forward; the next Council meeting will be on February 10th at 7:00 p.m.

City Hall will be closed January 20th, February 14th-18th, and Feb 6th closing at Noon

Jayme made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 pm. Andy seconded the motion and it passed with all in favor.

Signed:

Nicky Lahr



City Clerk-Treasurer, Holdingford